

Health Matters

NEWS TO LIVE BY

Department of Health Employee Newsletter

Vol. 1 Issue 2

James A. Buford, Director

May 2003

DOH Maternal and Family Health Administration Hosts 17th Annual Conference

A record-breaking 900 participants braved a wintery mix to attend the Department of Health's 17th Annual Maternal and Child Health Coordinating Conference, held February 26th at the Capitol Hilton Hotel.

Guests included: The Honorable Sandra (Sandy) C. Allen, Councilmember and Chair of the Committee on Human Services, Sharon Baskerville, Executive Director of the District of Columbia Primary Care Association, the Honorable Judge Eric Andell, Deputy Undersecretary for the U.S. Department of Education as well as a host of locally and nationally recognized experts.

The theme of the event, "*Ensuring the Health of Families in the Nation's Capital: Planning for Our Future*," was designed to engage the many stakeholders in the maternal and child health community around the development of the District's first Maternal and Child Health State Plan. The State Plan will ultimately guide the Department's efforts in reaching goals in improving infant mortality, decreasing teen pregnancy, and increasing access to primary care and services to persons with disabilities.

James A. Buford, DOH Director, delivering the keynote address, encouraged conferees to renew their commitment to maternal and child health. As he outlined some of the District's health indicators, Mr. Buford stated, "While there has been progress, still more needs to be done." Quoting author Margaret Meade he said, "Never believe a few good people cannot change the world, for indeed, that is all



that we ever have."

Ronald Lewis, DOH Sr. Deputy Director for Health Promotion, also addressed the audience. "This event is asking us to take a journey, to define who we are and what our priorities should be."

Sharon Baskerville served as master of ceremonies for the morning session, which was devoted to the current state of District emergency rooms. The session, facilitated by nationally known pediatrician Dr. Gloria Wilder Braithwaite (commonly known as Dr. Gloria), explored the inter-connections between the primary care system and the inappropriate utilization of emergency rooms.

During the discussion Dr. Gloria noted, "People want quick remedies for their ailments. We want fast food medicine, when we get sick. We want instant relief. And some folks use the ER as a way to see a specialist instead of waiting a couple of months for an appointment. People have figured out that if you give the right complaints, you will be seen right away in the ER."

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HIV/AIDS Administration Begins Rapid HIV Testing

The HIV/AIDS Administration (HAA) instituted the OraQuick Rapid HIV Antibody Test as of April 1 at selected sites. The newly approved test is 99.6 % accurate and can provide results the same day. The test collects a drop of blood from an individual, and requires no special medical or temperature control facilities to conduct the test.

Initially, the quick testing will be conducted at the D.C. Central Detention Facility, the Detoxification Facility and the Central Intake Facility. For more information, contact **Anthony Bethea**, Supervisory Public Health Analyst for Counseling, Testing and Referral, at (202) 724-8801.

What's In MAY

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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

James A. Buford, Director

Message From the Director



The Department of Health proved that health and fitness need not be dull by sponsoring a fun-filled D.C. Wellness Expo on Saturday, April 5 at the DC Armory.

The event was the kickoff to a summer-long TriCity Challenge in which Mayor Anthony Williams challenged District residents to adopt healthier lifestyles through proper nutrition, exercise and safe behaviors. Mayors in Baltimore and Philadelphia also are issuing the challenge to their residents.

While the day was full of fun, the underlying issues are very serious. Obesity is a major cause of morbidity and mortality in the United States. In the District, an alarming one in three adult residents is overweight or obese.

Obesity contributes to higher risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, and other diseases. Obesity also substantially impairs the quality of life. Poor nutrition and sedentary lifestyles are the main contributors to overweight and obesity and provide the greatest opportunities for prevention.

In fact, obesity is rapidly overtaking tobacco as the number one cause of preventable illness and death. Recent studies have linked obesity to several types of cancer. And we cannot overlook the fact that obesity is now threatening the health of our children, leading them to illnesses often seen only in later life.

I encourage all our employees to make a few basic changes toward good health. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Take a brief power walk at lunchtime. And choose healthier foods to eat.

I present the Mayor's challenge to employees to encourage you to take control of your lives. Remember, this is not a change you are making for me or even the Mayor, but for you and your family.


James A. Buford

DOH Emergency Response Management Plan

By **Julien K. Tolver**
DOH Risk Manager

During the past several weeks, the Office of Risk Management has received literally hundreds of inquiries from employees seeking information about our preparations for evacuation and "shelter-in-place" in the event of an emergency.

Since mid-February we have undertaken considerable efforts to develop our department-wide emergency response plan.

Mr. Buford, DOH Director, has identified risk management as an agency priority. Moreover, he has made the department's readiness to respond to emergencies/disasters the highest priority. Each Senior Deputy Director has assigned senior managers to the Risk Management Program Implementation Committee to help develop and implement our department's emergency response plan.

I am happy to inform all employees that on March 27, 2003, a draft copy of the department-wide emergency response plan was submitted for review to Mr. Buford and the D.C. Office of Risk Management.

In brief, the plan outlines for each facility the steps to be taken in case of evacuation due to fire or bomb threats, as well as preparations for shelter-in-place. In an evacuation, all employees are to meet at a designated area 500 feet from the building until all employees are accounted for. The names of those not accounted for will be reported to the Fire captain.

We are also inviting employees to participate in emergency evacuation training by volunteering to assume certain roles during an emergency/disaster. These include:

Floor Captain, responsible for clearing employees out in case of evacuations.

Assistant Floor Captain, assist the Floor Captain in all responsibilities.

Zone Monitors, supervise, direct, and assist movement of all personnel within their assigned area, ensures that all exits are clear and unblocked, and notify the

Floor Captain when their area is evacuated.

Assembly Area Monitors assist Floor Captains/Wardens in establishing names of individuals not reporting to assigned assembly area.

Shelter-in-Place

The D.C. Emergency Management Agency has published "*A Family Preparedness Guide*" to assist District residents in preparing for an emergency. It calls for an "Emergency Go Kit." The kit can include the following items:

- 3-day supply of water
- 3-5 day supply of non-perishable packaged or canned food
- Blankets
- Prescription medications
- Extra pair of glasses or contact lenses and solution
- Any special items, including toiletries, change of clothing etc.

There are several Floor Captains for each floor at DOH Headquarters and for all other DOH facilities. Some of the Floor Captains at Headquarters include: (B-1) **Mark McCall**, Computer Room; (1st) **Urbane Bass**, SCHS; (2nd) **Patricia Theiss**, HRA; (3rd) **Bryan Cheaseman**, MFHA and **John Pitts**, PHSA; (4th) **Brian Hale**, MAA, **Denise Calloway**, OCCR, **Jacque Patterson**, EHA; (5th) **Bernardo Gonzales**, MAA.

The department-wide emergency response plan also includes provisions to provide essential items that will be needed in the event employees have to remain at their workplace during an emergency.

If you are interested in volunteering for any role in evacuation procedures, please contact **Aaron Easterling** at (202) 671-0748. If you have any questions about the department's emergency response plan, contact **Julian K. Tolver**, Risk Manager, at (202) 442-5962.

17th Annual Conference

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According to James M. Chamberlain, M.D., Division Chief of Emergency Medicine at Children's National Medical Center, "the population of the ER has switched from a large number of uninsured patients in the 1980s to greater usage by insured patients whose own doctors close their offices at 5 p.m. Now we see primary care all day every day in the ER - colds, fever, ear infection, asthma, broken bones, and so on. We are also seeing more patients from the poverty and immigrant populations. And we are seeing sicker and sicker patients."

The discussion was continued in one of more than fifteen concurrent afternoon workshops that focused on various issues affecting public health, including the cultural aspects of depression, social marketing and delivery systems for men's health and the current trends in HIV/AIDS infection among women and girls in the District.

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APRA Event Highlights Alcohol Awareness

The DOH Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration hosted National Alcohol Screening Day on April 10, 2003 at several locations around the city.

National Alcohol Screening Day (NASD) is held in April during Alcohol Awareness Month. The program addresses a range of drinking behaviors from risky drinking to alcohol dependence. NASD is designed to raise public awareness about the consequences of at-risk drinking and alcohol's effect on general health, as well as specific medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and certain types of cancer.

The alcohol program includes an educational presentation, a written screening questionnaire, and an opportunity for participants to meet with a health professional. Referrals for further evaluation and/or treatment are provided when appropriate.

For more information contact Natleen Chance at (202) 442-5895 or visit NASD's website at www.mentalhealthscreening.org.

DOH NEWS BRIEFS

WIC Gets Grant--The DOH Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) has received special funding of more than \$777,000 from the U. S. Department of Agriculture for eight new initiatives to address critical needs within the WIC population. Among other activities, the grant funds will be used to deploy the WIC Mobile Outreach Van Express (MOVE) as a full service clinic; to improve WIC workspace at Children's Hospital and at Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Health; to promote and encourage breastfeeding, to implement an automated data system, and to develop an easy-to-understand pictorial food list for multi-lingual and low-English usage clients.

STD Moves--The Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) clinic on the grounds of D.C. General Hospital has been temporarily relocated from Building 8 to Building 9 until renovations are completed on Building 8 in August. The clinic will continue to provide examinations, diagnostic and treatment services for sexually transmitted services. The clinic is open 8:30 - 3:30, Monday through Friday. For more information, call (202) 698-4050 or (202) 727-9855.

HAA Receives \$28 Million Grant--The HIV/AIDS Administration received a grant award of \$27,871, 807 million from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. HHS

awarded \$600 million to 51 Eligible Metropolitan Areas (EMAs), The grant funds (Ryan White Title I) provide essential HIV/AIDS health care and a wide range of support services to those who lack health insurance.

Covered services include primary medical care, case management, assistance in obtaining emergency medications, home-based and hospice care, substance abuse and mental health services and other related services.

A portion of the grant (\$2.4 million) will be used for the Minority Aids initiative to bolster care and services among minority populations. For more information, contact **Felicia Lynch**, Director of Health and Support Services at (202) 724-3803.

City Officials, APRA Participate in Conference

Mayor Anthony Williams and **DOH Director James A. Buford** addressed the opening plenary session of the American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (AATOD) Monday, April 14.

AATOD convened its 2003 National Conference, "Integrating Evidence-Based Practices within Opioid Treatment," in Washington, D.C from April 13-16. More than 1,000 people attended the conference. Numerous workshops and collaborative panel sessions were held to explore the challenges faced by drug treatment providers in implementing broad, science-based clinical treatment programs. For more information on AATOD and the conference, go to www.aatod.org.

New Urgent Care Center Open at D.C. General Health Campus

A new Urgent Care Center (UCC) opened May 4 at the DC General Health Campus. The UCC is a walk-in medical center used for treating minor injuries and illnesses that are non-life threatening, such as asthma, sprains, minor burns, minor cuts, ear infections or allergic reactions. This new facility will operate 11 a.m. - 11 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays.

"As public health leaders, we are dedicated to ensuring access to the best health care for all District of Columbia

residents. We believe this new center better serves the health care needs of many who currently utilize public health and emergency room services," said Mr. Buford, DOH Director.

More than 20 specialty clinics and health services remain available on the DC General Health Campus, such as:

- Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) Clinic
- Cardiology Clinic
- Pediatrics Clinic
- Dental Clinic
- Gastro-Intestinal (GI) Clinic
- Obstetrics and Gynecology Clinic
- Surgery Clinic
- Urology clinic

For more information, contact the DOH Health Care Safety Net Administration at (202) 442-5961.

Kudos to...

Linda Y. Fisher, APRA Chief of Prevention and Youth Services, received the *Adele J. Key Prevention Award* for innovative, evidence-based substance abuse prevention programming and coalition building in low-income communities. She was given the award at the Dr. Lonnie E. Mitchell Historically Black Colleges and Universities Substance Abuse Annual Conference held in Baltimore, Maryland on April 2, 2003... **Walter L. Faggett**, M.D., Medical Director for the Medical Assistance Administration, was awarded a certificate and acknowledged by the federal Department of Health and Human Services for his efforts and guidance during his term as a member of the Vaccines and Related Biologic Products Advisory Committee.

17th Annual Conference

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During the workshop on "HIV/AIDS in Women and Girls in the District" **Jacqueline Bacchus**, HAA Deputy Administrator, and **Guy Weston**, HAA Director of Data and Research, warned that women are the fastest growing sector of new AIDS cases in DC. The rate of AIDS in African American women in the District has tripled from 11% of adult cases in 1991 to 33% in 2001.

They cited data that show that women are getting AIDS primarily from their male partners. In the past 20 years, the rate of heterosexual transmission to women has nearly doubled from 24% to 46% of cases among women. It has replaced injection drug use as the leading cause of HIV infection in women.

During the morning session, **Marilyn Seabrooks**, Chief, Maternal and Family Health Administration and coordinator for the conference, presented the second annual "Lantern Awards" to DOH Director James Buford, Sharon Baskerville, James M. Chamberlain, M.D. and Dr. Gloria. The award, inspired by Marian Wright Edelman's memoirs, recognizes individuals in the public health community who champion the health of families in the District of Columbia.

Coming Up!

Wed. 6/18

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Town Hall Meeting, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Capital View Conference Center, 101 Constitution Ave., NW, 9th Floor. Sponsored by the National Organization of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. For info. Contact: Krista Evans, APRA Women's Continuum Program Coordinator, (202) 535-1966

Thurs. 6/19

Community Forum, Mayor's Inter-Agency Task Force on Substance Abuse Strategies, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m., Shaw Jr. High School, 925 Rhode Island Ave., NW. For info. contact: Natleen Chance (202) 442-5895

Sat. 6/28

"Fit for a Lifetime-Men Make it Happen," Men's Health Week, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Hamilton Crown Plaza Hotel, 14th & K Sts., NW. Steadman Graham is luncheon keynote speaker.

Wed. 7/9

A Taste of Culture - East Africans; Noon - 1:30 p.m., 825 N. Capitol St., NE, Room 4131. RSVP by 7/2 to Renee Withers, 442-9199.

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**Government of the
District of Columbia**
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